

NEWS RELEASE

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For Immediate Release

FORMER KIRKSVILLE MAYOR CONVICTED ON FEDERAL ARSON CHARGES

St. Louis, Missouri -- Deborah Masten was convicted on federal charges in connection with the fire of Too Talls Two Eatery and Spirits, in January 2005, United States Attorney Catherine L. Hanaway and Adair County Prosecuting Attorney Mark Williams announced today. The jury returned their verdict after a eight-day trial in federal court in St. Louis.

“The jury heard the evidence and quickly determined that Ms. Masten intentionally started the fire that destroyed her restaurant,” said Hanaway. “The investigation of this case is another example of what cooperation between state, local and federal authorities can accomplish. I want to commend the many agencies for their countless hours of investigation, photographing and documenting a tremendous amount of evidence. Dean Hoag and Noelle Collins, the two Assistant United States Attorneys who prosecuted the case, did remarkable work.”

“We are thankful to all the investigative agencies that assisted in the case, especially Dean Hoag at the United States Attorney’s Office,” added Prosecuting Attorney Mark Williams. “We further are appreciative of the patience the citizens of Adair County have shown over the past two (2) years. We know it has been difficult to understand the length of time it took to bring this case to a close.”

“ATF Assistant Special Agent in Charge Jeff Fulton stated, “Arson investigations and prosecutions are among the most challenging undertaken. The swift jury verdict is a testament of the exemplary work of all of the agencies involved.”

Masten, 52, formerly of the 1300 block of Country Club Drive, Kirksville, was convicted of one felony count of maliciously damaging real and personal property by fire. She now faces a penalty range of five to 20 years in prison and/or fines up to \$250,000. Sentencing has been set for July 27,

2007 at 10:30 a.m.

Hanaway went on to commend the cooperation of state, local and federal authorities which include Adair County Prosecuting Attorney Mark Williams, Kirksville Police Department, Adair County Sheriff's Department, Kirksville Fire Department, Missouri State Highway Patrol, Missouri Fire Marshal, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) and IRS Criminal Investigation.